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## THE MIDDLE COURSE

*What should be done about certain seriously-objectionable conditions that have developed within our denomination? Three courses are being followed.*

(1) There is the course that goes to the extreme in one direction; it is the course of doing nothing. Different attitudes may lead to this course, but the result is the same. Some persons actually do not know of the very serious conditions that exist within our denomination; others are aware of the bad conditions, but feel that the exposing of such conditions would impair the efficiency of our denominational program; others honestly feel that some basic changes need to be made, but are afraid that their denominational standing might be jeopardized should they come out openly and take a positive stand; others feel that somehow, sometimes, things will just work themselves out for the good. All of these attitudes result in inaction for the present.

(2) There is the course that goes to the extreme in the other direction; it is the course of withdrawal from working with our conventions. Behind this approach is the attitude that conditions have become so bad that reform from within is impossible.

(3) And there is the middle course; it is the course of trying to correct things. This course would realistically take note of the bad conditions that exist, but it would not succumb to the pessimistic attitude that things are so far gone that there is no use in trying to bring about a change.

*It is the middle course that is followed by this paper. It is our feeling that the greater number of Baptists, once they become sufficiently informed, will follow this middle course of seeking to bring about some basic changes in our denominational life. It is hoped that a sufficient number of Baptists will take this attitude at this year's N. C. Baptist State Convention.*

*In This Issue*

## SOME QUESTIONS CONSIDERED

### ABOUT THIS MONTH'S ISSUE . . .

While this is a Southwide publication, most of what we have printed thus far has dealt with the current crisis of Baptist principle in North Carolina, and this is almost altogether the case with this present issue. But even in dealing with the North Carolina situation, we are considering something that really is significant for Southern Baptists everywhere. As has been said by one in an-

other state, "It seems that North Carolina has become the battleground, where the future course of the Southern Baptist Convention is being determined."

Since the North Carolina Baptist State Convention meets in Winston-Salem this Month, November 13-15, we feel that it is proper for this issue to be devoted to a consideration of questions facing the messengers to this convention.

James M. Bulman,

Editor

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## COMMITTEE OFFICERS

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## *What Did Last Year's N. C. State Convention Settle About The Autonomy Issue?*

We feel that, for all practical purposes, the answer to this question is simply, "nothing." Although we have talked with some who have felt that last year's State Convention so clarified its position as to safeguard a church's property in the event of a future court case, it should be obvious that the statement on congregational autonomy adopted by that convention would be of no value at all to a church. Why do we say this? Simply because *the very statement which last year's State Convention adopted has already been tested in court and found to be of no value in protecting the autonomy of a local church.*

The statement which was adopted last year is simply the same statement, word for word, that for some time has comprised Article IV in the constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention, which is as follows:

"While independent and sovereign in its own sphere, the Convention does not claim and will never attempt to exercise any authority over any other Baptist body, whether church, auxiliary organization, association, or Convention."

In the trial of the North Rocky Mount Church case, in 1953, this very statement was used as evidence and yet did not enable that particular church to keep its property in its attempted withdrawal from the Southern Baptist Convention. (Let it be understood that we feel that that particular church was not doing the right thing in seeking to withdraw co-operation from the Southern Baptist Convention. Our contention is merely

that it did have a right to pursue such a course, and that when the right of that church was disregarded, then the right of EVERY Baptist Church in the state to govern its own affairs was in effect disregarded.)

Indeed, it is this very statement from the Southern Convention's constitution that has come to be in doubt due to the Rocky Mount incident. It is for this reason that the editor of this paper has offered an amendment to the constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention, to be acted upon next Spring. *That the constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention does need to be changed, so as to spell out more clearly the complete freedom of the local church, has been declared by no less an authority than the author of the Southern Baptist Convention's constitution, DR. L. E. BARTON, of Montgomery, Ala., who has written to the editor of this paper, with permission to be quoted, as follows:*

"I think your amendment should be adopted at Chicago next Spring. If I am well and able to get there I expect to be by your side pitching for its adoption. It was not necessary before the Rocky Mount case, but is now, I feel." (This proposed amendment is as follows: "This convention does not claim that affiliation with this convention is in any way necessary for a church to be a Missionary Baptist Church; nor does this convention claim that affiliation with any other Baptist body, whether district association or state convention, is in any way necessary for a church to be affiliated with this convention; nor does this convention claim that a church's affiliation with this convention, as conceived by this convention, is in any degree of such a

nature as would prevent a church that once has entered into affiliation with this convention from discontinuing that affiliation, should that church for any reason whatsoever decide to discontinue that affiliation.")

Nor did last year's State Convention do anything by way of clarifying the position of the Baptist leaders who gave such startling testimony for the minority in the trial of the North Rocky Mount Church case.

To be sure, Dr. M. A. Huggins, Dr. H. W. Tribble, and Dr. Douglas Branch did present to the convention the statement on autonomy that was adopted. But, surely, those men, in having been present at the trial, knew full well that the statement which they were offering had already been tested in court and found to be worthless. Nor did they utter one word at the convention in acknowledgment of the fact that they had repudiated Baptist principle under oath. And, in view of the way in which they "explained" the Baptist position in court, what reason is there for supposing that, in presenting their statement on autonomy to the convention, they were actually coming around to acknowledging that a local church should be free to exercise complete self-determination? From the way in which Dr. M. A. Huggins "interpreted" on the witness stand certain statements which he had previously written, how can we help wondering as to how he would "interpret" the statement which he offered to the State Convention? In his book, *North Carolina for Christ*, Dr. Huggins had written, "*When, therefore, these churches joined forces they did not surrender, and do not now surrender, any of their autonomy.*" Yet, while on the witness stand, Dr. Huggins stated, "I do not agree with the statement that when Baptist churches join forces they do not surrender any of their autonomy" (Supreme Court of North Carolina, No. 95, Second District, Fall Term, 1954, p. 147, emphasis supplied). When asked under cross examination how his testimony was to be understood in the light of what he had written, he said, "*That is my interpretation on what I meant when I wrote that*" (Loc. cit.). Then Dr. Huggins

offered this further explanation of what he had written:

"I wrote the following: 'There is no such thing as the Baptist Church in the sense that one may speak of the Methodist Church or the Presbyterian Church. The Baptist Church is one local congregation, that and nothing more. It is the body of Christ, a living organism. The Baptist denomination is an organization which came into existence about 150 years ago because some members of a Baptist Church discovered that the world-wide mission of the local church could not become effective unless Baptist churches worked together. When, therefore, these churches joined forces they did not surrender, and do not now surrender, any of their autonomy.'

"I DID NOT MEAN WHAT I SAID WHEN I WROTE THAT" (Court Record, as cited above, pp. 147-148, emphasis supplied).

In view of all this, can we help wondering as to just how we should understand the statement, which he issued to the convention last year, that "the Convention does not claim and will never attempt to exercise any authority over any other Baptist body"?

### ***Can Principle Be Separated From Personality?***

The Baptist state paper of Virginia, *Religious Herald*, has again come out with a strong, forthright editorial on the issue of local church autonomy.

The editorial is as follows:

"Litigation over property rights of the North Rocky Mount Baptist Church again received public attention when Superior Court Judge Clifton L. Moore, of North Carolina, rendered an adverse decision upon an appeal to reopen the case. . . . He affirmed: 'If, through the years, a Baptist church associates itself with Missionary Baptist practices and procedures, it becomes a Missionary Baptist church and part of the membership cannot change denomination without breaking faith with the orthodox members. The church does not lose its right of autonomy, but neither does it gain any rights.'

"Apart from the fact that these state-



ments are vague and contradictory, they renew the serious infringement upon basic principles of Baptist faith and practice. The decision of the Supreme Court of North Carolina named the Southern Baptist Convention, and it made the Convention with its agencies a point of reference in reaching a decision in favor of the minority group at Rocky Mount. To say that the Southern Baptist Convention has no interest in this case is to say that Southern Baptists have lost their concern for the autonomy of the local congregation. If the decisions of the North Carolina courts stand without protest by the Southern Baptist Convention, the future security of the churches will be seriously impaired.

"Whatever causes may exist for the failure of the Convention to act with respect to this matter should be carefully examined with the hope that some remedy might be applied before it is too late. Apparently the difficulty lies on the one hand with a few leaders who have become so involved that they overlook principles in their effort to save face. On the other hand attempts to safeguard the principle of autonomy have become closely associated with a small group who too readily assume the role of crusaders. The result is a difficult division which creates weakness within the Baptist ranks. On the one side are those who try to justify leaders who, in testimony at the North Rocky Mount Baptist Church trial, compromised the principle of autonomy, but certainly with no intentional harm. On the other side are those who have become so zealous in their attack upon these leaders that they press the charge far beyond the original issue. This clash between personalities was apparent during the sessions of the Southern Convention at Kansas City, and it caused regrettable incidents. It is evident that feelings still run high. What Southern Baptists need is a way to lift this question above the realm of personal attacks and emotionalism. Those who are involved should attempt to make this possible. The principle is far more important than any individual. We plead for a sane and balanced appraisal of the issue. The autonomy of every Baptist church in the Convention is in danger. We, like our Baptist forefathers, should

take united action in a petition of protest against the harmful decisions of the civil court in North Carolina, repudiating the relationship which the court described as existing between local churches and the Southern Baptist Convention and reaffirming our belief in the complete autonomy of a local Baptist church" (Oct. 4).

We are highly pleased over the way in which it is brought out that the Rocky Mount incident is not a "sectional" matter (as the *Watchman-Examiner*, for example, would have us believe), but rather is something which threatens the autonomy of "every" Southern Baptist church. We find it even more encouraging to note that a state paper has come out and stated plainly that the Baptist leaders who testified in that famous trial did "compromise" Baptist principle.

*But we cannot but regard it as unfortunate that the Virginia paper, for which we have considerable admiration, has adopted so unrealistic an approach as to suggest that this issue can be settled apart from reckoning with the personalities that are inextricably involved.*

To handle this issue adequately without reference to personalities would require more than the wisdom of a Solomon. We do not find anything in the editorial quoted above that would suggest how the questions of personality and principle could possibly be cut asunder so as still to leave Baptist freedom intact.

*The danger to Baptist freedom lies not merely in the decisions of the courts, but also in the fact that certain of our prominent Baptist leaders have started out on a course so contrary to local church autonomy. Even if no such court decisions had been made, we would find it to be a serious danger that we had among those at the helm certain men who have forsaken the essential basis of congregational freedom. Can it be safe for the preservation of Baptist democracy to have such men in positions of leadership? Is it safe, for example, to have such a person as Dr. Douglas Branch in the responsible position of chairman of the committee to survey the work of the many agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention, when—ac-*

cording to his sworn testimony—he follows an ecclesiology [essentially Presbyterian] that would not recognize a church as a Missionary Baptist Church before it became affiliated with an association? (Court Record, as cited earlier, pp. 208-209). Or — unless we actually prefer to have our Baptist ministers of tomorrow to be advocates of something essentially like Presbyterian ecclesiology—is it safe to have such a person as Dr. E. A. McDowell to teach in Southeastern Seminary, when, according to his sworn testimony, a church is not even a “Baptist” church unless it is cooperating with an association or convention! (Court Record, as cited, p. 195). If we have actually reached a point where our characteristic Baptist doctrines no longer matter, what excuse do we have to maintain our separate de-

### nominal existence?

We do not doubt that the leaders sincerely felt that they were doing the right thing. With whatever high degree of sincerity they may have acted, however, we must still regard it as very objectionable that they have come to feel that the destruction of the Baptist system of congregational autonomy is justifiable in order to increase the efficiency of our denominational program. Could it be denied that they did intend to destroy the autonomy of Baptist churches? What then is the alternative? Must not the alternative explanation be that they simply *did not realize* that they were advocating a position which, if adopted, would have such tragic results? Either they were acting with the deliberate intention of destroying local church autonomy, and thus they are hardly to be



trusted with positions of denominational leadership; or they were unable to realize the obvious fact that the position which they were taking would be destructive of local church autonomy, and thus they are hardly competent to be our leaders.

We feel that the *Religious Herald* has put the matter quite well in saying, "The principle is far more important than any individual." This is the very point that we have tried to make. The basic Baptist principle must be re-established. And since we can not really re-establish the principle while continuing to endorse the leadership of those who have taken a course that would be destructive of that principle, then we must discontinue our endorsement of those leaders—for "the principle is far more important than any individual." And are not those who are standing in the way of making a basic correction of the infringement of the principle simply putting a few individuals above the principle? And if such special privilege is to be granted to a few individuals, will it not set a very bad precedent for the future of our Baptist work? According to the Baptist way, no leader is supposed to be on so high a pedestal that he is above being reprimanded. *But if this serious repudiation of Baptist principle is going to be white-washed, and these individuals are still to be esteemed as great and good leaders, what kind of evils are not apt to be tolerated provided they have the sanction of having been performed by a sufficient number of sufficiently revered persons?*

It is our firm persuasion that if Baptist integrity is to be preserved, then we must take such positive action in the present instance that never again will any leader, however highly esteemed, undertake to suppress the autonomy of even the smallest local Baptist church.

DR. RAND'S COLUMN ON  
CATHOLICISM WILL BE  
RESUMED NEXT ISSUE.

## Where Do The Other Leaders Stand?

In a time when so significant a portion of our leadership has taken so disappointing a position on the issue of local church freedom and on certain other basic issues, the question naturally arises as to where other leaders, who have not publicly committed themselves, stand on these questions. We certainly would not presume as to the position of every prominent person within the N. C. Baptist Convention. But we have received some very interesting expressions of opinions from several well-known figures.

From assurances which he had given to certain ones (now connected with this committee) before the State Convention last fall, we had expected a positive stand to be made by DR. J. C. CANIPE, President of the State Convention and one long known as a very strong defender of conservative Christianity. Some months ago, however, Dr. Canipe surprised us when he was publicly asked about certain issues. He was speaking at a pastors' conference that was attended by several pastors of different associations.

After making a spirited and impressive talk on the subject of Christian education, he asked if any of the group cared to ask questions about the subject. In the discussion that followed, Dr. Carl English, of Liberty, N. C., asked Dr. Canipe for specific information concerning some generalizations which he had made in his talk. Dr. English said: "You have asserted that there is modernism at Wake Forest. What evidence do you have that this is so?" Surprisingly, Dr. Canipe began to hedge. The substance of his reply was merely that he had "heard" that "some of the students had said some things."

Whereupon Dr. C. K. Rand said: "Why, Dr. Canipe, for evidence of modernism at Wake Forest all we need is to refer to Dr. Tribble's court testimony on the *Virgin Birth*."

Dr. Canipe cut in: "Oh, but we're not talking about that!"

Rand replied: "But, Dr. Canipe, the question has been asked concerning what evidence there is of modernism at Wake



Forest. Instead of mentioning the hearsay information of what some students are supposed to have said, *why not go to the one matter of clear evidence that can not be doubted—Dr. Tribble's own sworn testimony? Why not go to the court record?*"

More surprisingly, Dr. Canipe suddenly manifested ignorance of the subject, asking: "What record?"

Rand said: "Why, the record of his testimony in the Rocky Mount trial! You have seen his testimony on the Virgin Birth?"

At that point, Rev. Woodrow Robbins spoke up and reminded the State Convention president: "You remember, Dr. Canipe, I sent you a copy of what he had said about the Virgin Birth in court."

With some hesitation, Dr. Canipe replied: "yes."

Then Rand asked: "And you read it?"

Again with hesitation, "yes."

Rand continued: "And Dr. Tribble did allow that Jesus had an earthly father?"

The answer, with noticeable hesitancy, "yes."

Could it possibly be that the strong conservative, Dr. Canipe, was actually trying to "cover up" for the President of Wake Forest! Why was it like pulling an eye tooth to get out of him a definite answer concerning Dr. Tribble's court testimony?

If the above is in any way not a correct representation of what Dr. Canipe said at that pastors' conference, we will gladly offer him space in this paper for him to give his version of it. In fact, we would be very much pleased for him to come out and state positively that he can not give his support to any denominational leader who compromises essential Christian doctrine.

From the way in which he had been quoted in the public press several months ago, and from the way in which he had expressed himself to some of us last fall, we felt that a definite stand on the issue of local church autonomy could be expected on the part of **DR. BROADUS JONES**, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Raleigh and also trustee of Wake Forest College.

In more recent weeks, however, we were disappointed to find Dr. Jones

rather rabidly defending certain of the leaders who had testified for the minority in the North Rocky Mount Church trial. In a conversation with the editor of this paper and Dr. Rand, Dr. Jones was particularly insistent upon praising Dr. M. A. Huggins and Dr. Harold Tribble. When reminded of how these men had betrayed the Baptist position, Dr. Jones said: "But I can't go against Huggins. He's my friend."

We told him that we had counted certain of these leaders as friends, but that in such an instance principle must be placed above friendship.

Dr. Jones replied: "But according to the record Huggins has done a good work."

He was reminded that according to the court record Dr. Huggins had not served so commendably, since, according to that record of his sworn testimony, he had taken a position that would be destructive of the characteristic Baptist principle of the freedom of the local church.

Dr. Jones, though admitting that Dr. Huggins' and Dr. Tribble's testimony was not in accordance with Baptist teaching, contended that the thing of real concern was the very objectionable court decision, not the testimony.

We argued that, in certain respects, the testimony of the leaders was actually more alarming than the decision of the courts.

Dr. Rand prophesied that, regardless as to Dr. Jones' position, "*come this fall — at the State Convention the Baptist people will remove both Huggins and Tribble.*"

Dr. Jones said that he did not think so. He reasoned: "You can't expect the average preacher to go against Huggins. Why he looks to Huggins to get to move to another place."

Rand continued: "That's part of the bad situation that we're against! It's not right for Huggins and the state office to have such control that preachers have to look to headquarters for permission for what to do." And Rand went on to say that he felt that an increasing number of ministers were beginning to resent this set-up.

Dr. Jones offered the counsel of discouragement, saying: "Well, I can't support you."

Rand replied: "Be that as it may, more and more preachers are getting aroused. And that preacher in a little place like—Pumpkin-hollow, has one vote at the convention,—just as much of a vote as the pastor of the largest First Church."

Dr. Jones answered: "Oh but he doesn't have the influence of the pastor of the large church!"

Rand came back: "Be that as it may, he has a vote, and there are more pastors of small churches than of the large ones!"

Dr. Jones attempted to explain that we were going about the matter in the wrong way. He insisted: "I believe in the great principle of autonomy just as much as you do, but my approach is different."

We asked him what he was doing for the cause of autonomy.

He told us: "Well, you fellows are carrying the ball right now. But when you get through, then some of the rest of us will step in."

He stressed constantly the idea that we should "stick to the principle and leave off the personalities."

Our reply was that one could not consistently endorse the Baptist principle and at the same time endorse the very men who have repudiated that principle. . . . And so went the conversation. Dr. Jones was not able to convince us; nor were we able to convince him.

If we have in any way misrepresented what Dr. Jones has said, we will gladly offer him space in this paper to state just what is his position.

A much more constructive attitude was evidenced by DR. E. L. SPIVEY, Secretary of State Missions, in a conversation with the editor of this paper and Dr. Rand, although Dr. Spivey was amazingly uninformed about certain aspects of the autonomy issue.

Dr. Spivey stated that he "had been asked" to go and testify in the North Rocky Mount Church case. "But," he explained, "I refused; for I did not want to interfere with a local church."

As we commenced to make some remarks about what was said in court by those who did go and testify, he seemed not to grasp fully what we were talking about. He wanted to know where we were getting our information about what the

leaders said in their testimony. We told him that we got it from the official court record. Dr. Spivey replied that he had read the court record but that he had found nothing resembling what we were talking about. As we questioned what he meant by "court record," we found that what he had in mind was merely the fifteen page report of the Supreme Court decision, not the hundreds of pages of testimony!

We went on discussing the nature of this testimony. At length, we told him how that Dr. Douglas Branch had testified in effect that, whereas a church may by majority vote begin affiliation with an association, a church could not by majority vote discontinue this affiliation. And that struck home: Dr. Spivey exclaimed: "You mean that Branch said THAT!"

As we discussed the testimony which had been given by Dr. Huggins, the real significance of what the leaders had done seemed to come to him. He was clearly wrestling with the issue when he asked: "Well, if Huggins has really come around to changing his mind, what then? What are we to do? Does he have a right to change his mind?"

Our reply was that Dr. Huggins certainly did have a right to change his mind and adopt a doctrinal position other than that of the Baptists. *But we also pointed out that the Baptist people are under no obligation to continue to employ him once he has abandoned certain essential Baptist tenets. We asked Dr. Spivey if he could conscientiously continue to hold his position if he no longer held the Baptist view on certain essential principles.* With very evident searchings of conscience, Dr. Spivey answered: "No, I could not."

As we have said of the others who have been mentioned, so we say in regard to Dr. Spivey: if we have not correctly represented what he has said, we will gladly offer him an opportunity to explain his position in this paper.

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## What Is Our Motive?

By Woodrow W. Robbins

Our group has followed the following lines of activity:

1. We have sought to bring home to the Baptist people of North Carolina, and elsewhere, the deadly danger of the court ruling in the North Rocky Mount Church case, which in effect ties the property of the churches in N. C. to the State and Southern Conventions.

2. We have sought to get our people to realize that even some of our prominent leaders have taken a position that would lead to the destruction of the freedom of our churches. The testimony which has been given by these leaders in court saddens our hearts. But, as sadly as one feels one is brought face to face with this: he can't keep quiet about it, *for to be quiet is to be a part of the evil.*

3. Our group has sought (and this was before our group was incorporated) to get the constitution of the N. C. Baptist State Convention amended, so as to have the constitution spell out the Convention's acknowledgment of the right of each church to cooperate or not to cooperate with the Convention. This was at the State Convention in Asheville last year. This amendment failed; the vote being 4 to 1 against it.

4. We have sought to get the Southern Baptist Convention to do three things; (a.) to re-affirm its historic stand on the autonomy of the local church; (b.) to condemn the court ruling in the Rocky Mount case; (c.) to amend its constitution so as to have the Convention in effect enter into agreement with the churches that the churches' complete freedom is to be guaranteed.

The first was achieved. The second was not achieved. The third will be decided upon next year.

5. We have begun publishing this paper to inform our people of the serious danger threatening our historic principle of church autonomy—the crown jewel of the Baptist doctrine of the church.

We are surprised that the question has even been asked of us, **What are your motives in doing this?**

It is our feeling that one who did *not* take a positive stand on this crucial issue would be under obligation to express

what possible motives he could have. But we are glad to explain our motives.

*Our motive is not to smear the character or ruin the career of any Baptist leader.* When Baptist leaders do not stick to Baptist principles, and when they take a position that would endanger the property of Baptist churches, we feel that someone must speak out. We have quoted their own sworn testimony; and if they have conducted themselves on the witness stand in a way that they are hurt by the truth of this coming out — then the responsibility is theirs. We have several times sought to get these men to explain themselves. We tried to have a meeting with Dr. Huggins, Dr. Tribble, and Dr. Branch in the High Point Baptist Pastors' Conference—which was refused. Do not Baptist people who help support the work of our Conventions have a right to expect an explanation of our leaders in such an instance? Why is it that these leaders have given no explanation of their action and words? They have kept quite, saying nothing about their testimony, evidently seeking to give the impression that all is well. *All is not well, and will not be until something is done to remove the effect of the court ruling and until we can have the assurance that the ones leading us are not intent upon destroying certain essentials of our distinctive Baptist position.*

*Neither is our motive notoriety.* We are not trying to call attention to ourselves. It has been asked why we have permitted certain information to get into the daily newspapers. What were we supposed to do when we tried to get information out through the Baptist press—but had the Baptist press closed to us? In North Carolina, the *Biblical Recorder* and *Charity and Children* closed their doors. (Only after several of us had made vigorous protest at the way in which the *Charity and Children* had reported the recent S. B. C. did that paper so much as print the statement on autonomy which the Convention adopted in Kansas City this year!) We have allowed certain things to be given to the public press because we have felt that the danger is such that our people are very much in need of certain information.

If undue notice has come to us, we have taken no pleasure in it (at least this writer has not, and I think the same is true of my associates). But the danger to Baptist freedom is too serious for us to hold back simply because we might be criticized for the public attention that has been brought about by our attempt to reach our Baptist people with this information.

*Nor is it our motive to hurt the program of our Conventions.* But we have been told that we are apt to do this very thing. We have been advised to "lay low, keep quite, work behind closed doors to correct the wrong—so that this will not reach the rank and file of our Baptist people."

Let us frankly face it: the program could possibly be hurt, *for the time being*, by bringing out publicly the wrong that has been done. **BUT THE PROGRAM WILL BE HURT FAR MORE SERIOUSLY — AND MORE PERMANENTLY — BY DECEITFULLY COVERING UP THE WRONG THAN BY BRINGING OUT THE TRUTH AND CLEANING THINGS UP!** *Our Baptist people will have more confidence in our Baptist Conventions if we assure them that we will correct this and any wrong that comes up.*

As an example of my attitude and motive: since taking my stand, I have had independent mission boards approach me to get missionaries to come before my church in view of getting support from my church. I have refused. I have replied that we were supporting our own mission work, and that there would be no purpose in having a missionary from an independent board come into our church under the impression that he would find support from us. I am mainly concerned with the work of our own Conventions; I want to see *that* work strengthened.

To sum up: *our motive is simply to re-establish our State and Southern Conventions on our historic Baptist principles.* As much as we can, we want to *help*, not hinder—*build*, not tear down. But at times, in order to build one has to tear away faulty foundations. Therefore, in order to maintain those principles that have made us a great denomination, we must correct every wrong that would endanger those principles.

## What About The Trustees Of Wake Forest College?

As far as we know this paper was the only publication prior to the October 11 meeting of the Wake Forest trustees to say anything about the possibility of there being a "stacked" slate of pro-Tribble nominees being presented to the State Convention this fall. This was mentioned in our September issue.

Mr. David S. Greene, writing in the *Greensboro Daily News* concerning the October 11 meeting of the trustees, has this to report:

"Opponents of Dr. Harold W. Tribble, president of Wake Forest College, today gained what they consider a major victory in their struggle to oust him.

"Hubert E. Olive of Lexington was elected incoming president of the board of trustees at a closed board meeting this afternoon.

"Olive, who will take office the first of the year, has not committed himself in the controversy, but anti-Tribble trustees and alumni consider him a definite member of their camp.

"*But while the anti-Tribble members of the board considered the victory, they also considered the answer they received to a question they carried into today's meeting.*

"The question was this: Had pro-Tribble members of a committee of the board already sent a list of proposed new trustees to the nominating committee of the Baptist State Convention?

"*Anti-Tribble trustees had received what they considered definite information that such a list had been forwarded some weeks ago, and felt that the power of the full board had been usurped if such had happened.*

"Members of the board committee, named to seek out prospective new trustees, were questioned about this today. Trustees, who asked not to be identified, said the following explanation was given:

"1. That the committee met during the summer and prepared a tentative list of names, *which its chairman ultimately forwarded to the chairman of the convention's nominating committee* [the chairman of the latter committee

being Dr. Halph Herring].

"2. That Dr. Douglas Branch of Rocky Mount, who headed the group, said he later learned the list should have been submitted to the board of trustees, and that he wrote the chairman of the convention's nominating committee to disregard the list. . . .

"In the past, the full board of trustees has sent 18 names to the convention committee, with that committee selecting nine names to present to the convention with its recommendation for election to the board.

"After the explanation was given of the list that had gone to the convention committee, the full board approved a new list of 18 names to be forwarded.

"The nominating committee, which does not have to follow the list, will make its recommendation during [the meeting of] the Baptist State Convention" [which, it might be added, does not have to accept the list which the nominating committee presents]. (Oct. 12, emphasis supplied)

Why is it that certain trustees are opposed to Dr. Tribble? As far as we know, no specific and documented charges have been made public in regard to the position of these trustees. The executive committee of the board of trustees last February took charge of the extensive report of the investigating committee and put it under lock and key; and Mr. Basil Watkins, former president of the board, has been quoted in the public press as charging that even some of the trustees have not been permitted to see this report.

Regardless as to this, however, the fact remains that *there are* certain charges, which have been made public, against the President of Wake Forest College,—charges that are unanswerable, because they are as authentic as the official court record of the North Rocky Mount Church case. These charges should give the trustees all the information they need as to whether or not Dr. Tribble should be retained as President of a Baptist college.

While several persons connected with our committee were talking with one of the trustees recently, however, we were

disappointed as to his attitude towards the importance of essential Baptist and Christian principles. He told us that he was not concerned with the question of local church autonomy nor even with the question of the Virgin Birth, in so far as these matters related to the Wake Forest controversy; and he said that there were several members of the board who had no interest in such matters. **When things have reached this stage it is time for some serious re-examination of our whole Convention policy.**

Aside from the requirement that the trustees make a "full report of all work done and undertaken", the constitution of the Baptist State Convention sets forth but ONE positive obligation for the trustees, and that is that they "shall be responsible to the Convention for the operation of its insitutions **IN ACCORDANCE WITH BAPTIST PRINCIPLES**" (Article IX, Subsection 2, emphasis supplied).

Has it become an unwritten policy that this requirement is something that is to be honored more in the breach than in the observance? Until such time as our constitution is changed, however, we have a right to expect that the trustees see to it that Wake Forest is operated "in accordance with Baptist principle."

### **Why Is There Need of Having An Accountant's Report On The Audited Books Of The Convention?**

On June 25, our committee requested the General Board of the N. C. Baptist State Convention "to secure from the Certified Public Accountant who audits the Convention's books a report as to whether or not any funds of the Convention were expended in any way in connection with the North Rocky Mount Church case."

Of course, the audit of the Convention's books is printed each year in the Convention Annual; but, in the nature of the case, many of the items listed in the audit are of a very general nature and do not give very specific information as to just how certain of the funds have been expended. What we want is for these figures to be "broken down."

**But why is there any reason for feeling that funds might have been so used?**



To begin with, the General Secretary and Treasurer of the State Convention has admitted in a letter that the effort was at least made to get the General Board to "aid in paying attorney's fees in connection with the trial."

Since our committee has discovered, by a careful examination of the records of the Rocky Mount case in the office of the Superior Court of Nash County, that the expenses of none of the prominent Baptist leaders who testified for the minority were included in the cost of the court, the question naturally arises as to how the expenses of these men were paid—especially the considerable expenses that must have been incurred by Dr. W. W. Barnes in coming all the way from Texas to explain to an Episcopalian Judge in North Carolina how it is that Baptist churches are not completely autonomous.

Furthermore, it can be proven that certain COOPERATIVE PROGRAM funds have at least been expended in some way in connection with the North Rocky Mount Church controversy. We would like to know, specifically, to whom these funds were paid.

Nor has the General Board's response to this request been such as to clear up the question. At its July meeting, the board refused to authorize the Certified Public Accountant who audits the books to make the desired report. To put the matter plainly: *if there is nothing to "hide," then why keep the books closed? If the request of this committee is a frivolous one, unsupported by any real facts, — then would not an accountant's report serve to discredit this committee and, at the same time, to inspire renewed confidence in the General Board and the present state leadership?*

We do not doubt the sincerity of Rev. Woodrow Bullard, President of the General Board, in stating in a letter that, "so far as I am able to determine from the minutes of the board and from the expenditures of the convention, no amount has been paid to any group in connection with this case." We are sure that he is merely misinformed, *since we have concrete information that certain COOPERATIVE PROGRAM funds have at least been expended in some way in connection with this church case. Fur-*

*thermore, we wonder if Rev. Bullard could really be expected to know all that went on in connection with the North Rocky Mount Church case, for, after all, he was not President of the General Board at the time of the trial of that case. At that time, Dr. C. C. Warren was still President.*

#### WHAT READERS ARE SAYING . . .

A Virginia minister, upon coming in contact with a copy of the August issue of SOUTHERN BAPTIST FREE PRESS, writes: ". . . though I have some misgivings about the paper, I am subscribing. Southern Baptists need an independent journalism. Your paper can make a big contribution by discussing, as objectively as possible, the question of church autonomy. Its aim should not be turning up dirt or heresy hunting. It should, as far as possible, deal with issues rather than personalities, and go after no one's hide. If my advice is worth anything, I would say not to print anything more in the vein of the cartoon showing Woodrow Bullard and M. A. Huggins (sitting on the locked books with a pop gun) complete with halos. That sort of thing will weaken the paper and cause its purpose to be misunderstood."

It is my prayer that your efforts will result in a greater freedom for everyone, including the state papers."

A FLORIDA pastor says: "*The first four issues of your paper contain information that should be placed into the hands of every Baptist, both layman and pastor! I have tried to keep abreast of the trends within our denomination but only realized just how little I did know about what was going on when I read your splendid publication.*"

Although we have had requests for subscriptions from 29 states, most of the correspondence has come from North Carolina, as would be expected. From that state a layman has this to say: "*It was shocking to learn of some of the happenings at the recent Southern Baptist Convention and at last we laymen are beginning to understand the Wake Forest situation — thanks to the Autonomy Committee.*"